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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a short course for middle school students that was sponsored by the Higher Education Council of Columbus, Ohio, and undertaken to promote the development of self-expression capabilities by using public speaking as a communicative channel. The class was designed to be completed in three class meetings of three hours each, convening once a week. Included in the guide are the following: (1) detailed lesson plans for each of the class meetings; (2) instructions for individual speech assignments; (3) a list of lecture topics covered at each class meeting; (4) objectives and criteria by which the speeches should be formulated and judged; (5) a copy of the course description which is used for advertising the course; (6) a copy of the letter sent to parents at the beginning of the course, emphasizing that the parents should not plan on attending since this has been shown to significantly inhibit speakers; and (7) a copy of a course completion certificate which is awarded to each student upon finishing. (HB)

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SELF EXPRESSION THROUGH PUBLIC SPEAKING:

A SHORT COURSE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

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This paper describes a short course for middle school students, sponsored by the Higher Education Council of Columbus (Ohio), that was developed by the author. The author holds a Ph.D. in speech-communication and is an associate professor of communication arts. He has earned certification to teach in secondary level public schools and has worked with middle school students.

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SELF EXPRESSION THROUGH PUBLIC SPEAKING:

A SHORT COURSE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

This paper describes a short course for middle school students, sponsored by the Higher Education Council of Columbus (Ohio), that was developed by the author. The author holds a Ph.D. in speech-communication and is an associate professor of communication arts. He has earned certification to teach in secondary level public schools and has worked with middle school students.

Within the short course, students enhance self expression capabilities using public speaking as a communicative channel. Students are encouraged to speak on topics they are knowledgeable about and interested in. This allows students to improve self expression, observe self expression practices of other students, and learn about new subjects. Three types of speaking are emphasized: Speech of Introduction, Informative Presentation, and Impromptu Speech. This is a skills oriented "hands on" course. Students receive instruction and perform in accordance with assigned instruction.

The short course is divided into three segments that meet on three consecutive Wednesday evenings. Classes meet from 5:30-9 p.m. with a 30 minute break for dinner. An advertisement description of the course is included as Attachment #1 to this paper. The course plans for class meetings are designed to meet the aforementioned objectives. The following descriptions highlight primary aspects of each

class meeting.

Class Meeting #1 includes: 1) introduction to the course, 2) self-introductions by students (sitting in a circle), 3) instructions for the Speech to Inform/How-to-do-it Speech, 4) an example of the Speech to Inform/How-to-do-it Speech delivered by the instructor, and 5) Impromptu Speeches by students (dealing with topics assigned by the instructor).

The Speech to Inform/How-to-do-it Speech is 4-5 minutes and is videotaped. Students prepare a key-word outline (emphasizing introduction, body, & conclusion) and are to use a visual aid. Students are encouraged to speak on topics they are knowledgeable about or interested in. A volunteer student videotapes the instructor, as he/she delivers an example speech, to help familiarize students with the taping process. The tape is replayed in class.

Students are videotaped when they deliver their impromptu speeches. Each speech is 2-3 minutes. Taped student speeches are replayed for the class. This is followed by a brief discussion to relieve student anxiety about being videotaped.

Remaining class time for the evening is spent on lecture. Lecture topics are intended to help students in the preparation and delivery of their speeches. Lecture topics are described later in this paper.

Class Meeting #2 includes: 1) student delivery of Speech to Inform/How-to-do-it Speeches (videotaped) followed with brief evaluations by the instructor at the end of each

speech, 2) portions of each videotaped speech (about two minutes) are replayed in class, 3) instructions for the Current Events Speech, 4) an example of the Current Events Speech delivered by the instructor.

The brief evaluation by the instructor at the end of each Speech to Inform/How-to-do-it Speech is intended to provide constructive criticism to help students improve on the next speech. Positive aspects are noted along with at least one suggested improvement. Time is also allotted for questions from the audience.

The Current Events Speech is 3-4 minutes and can be about any current event (local, national or international) topic. Students are encouraged to seek topics from newspapers and/or magazines. Speeches are to be videotaped. Students prepare a key-word outline (emphasizing introduction, body, & conclusion).

Remaining time for the evening is spent on closing comments regarding the Speech to Inform/How-to-do-it Speech, questions about the Current Events Speech, and lecture. The relevance of lecture topics is highlighted using examples from speeches already delivered by students.

Class Meeting #3 includes: 1) students deliver Current Events Speeches (videotaped) followed by brief evaluation by the instructor at the end of each speech, 2) portions of each videotaped speech (about two minutes) are replayed in class, 3) Impromptu Speeches are delivered by students, 4) lecture, and 5) certificates of course completion are given to

students at the close of the course.

The question period following each Current Events Speech receives greater emphasis than with the Speech to Inform/How-to-do-it Speech. An objective is to enhance student ability to respond to questions and speak spontaneously. Similarly, the Impromptu Speech helps students improve their ability to speak spontaneously.

A variety of lecture topics are covered at each class meeting. These topics are intended to help students in the preparation and delivery of their speeches. Lecture topics include: 1) types of informative speeches, 2) outlining the speech using the key-word outline approach, 3) patterns of organization, 4) audience analysis, and 5) a summary of nonverbal communication concerns for the public speaker.

At a minimum, lecture and individual speech instructions seek to ensure students: 1) speak loud, clear, & slow, 2) employ effective eye contact with the audience, 3) use key-word outlining, and 4) base their speech content on logical premises. Key-word outlining involves developing an outline using key-words that summarize main points of the speech (rather than writing a complete text of the speech). Having only key-words to speak from helps the student establish eye contact with the audience and avoid reading the speech.

A letter is sent to parents prior to the beginning of the course. Among instructions to parents is a request that parents not plan on waiting for their child in the classroom (to avoid inhibition of students as they speak). This letter

is included as Attachment #2 to this paper.

Students receive a course completion certificate at the end of class meeting #3. This certificate acknowledges course sponsorship and completion. The certificate is included as Attachment #3 to this paper.

The author finds teaching the course to be an enlightening opportunity. It provides a unique avenue to apply his public speaking instruction skills (outside of the traditional college classroom). Similarly, it provides middle-school students a glimpse of a postsecondary level educational institution. This can serve as a stepping stone in their pre-college goal setting.

Attachment #1

HIGHER EDUCATION COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS

AND

FRANKLIN COUNTY EDUCATIONAL COUNCIL

GIFTED AND TALENTED MIDDLE SCHOOLS PROGRAM

TITLE: Self Expression Through Public Speaking

DESCRIPTION: Students will enhance self expression capabilities using public speaking as a communicative channel. Students will be encouraged to speak on topics they are knowledgeable about and interested in. This allows students to improve self expression, observe self expression practices of other students, and learn about new subjects. Three types of speaking will be emphasized: Speech of Introduction, Informative Presentation, and Impromptu Speech.

This is a skills oriented "hands on" course. Students will receive instruction and perform in accordance with assigned instruction.

HOST INSTITUTION: Ohio Dominican College

PROGRAM LOCATION: School: Ohio Dominican College
Address: 1216 Sunbury Road
Building: Erskine Hall
Room Number: 222

MEETING TIMES: Wednesdays 5:30 - 9 p.m. (April 8, 15, & 22--1992). There will be a 30 minute break for dinner between 6:30 - 7 p.m. (there is a cafeteria in Erskine Hall).

APPLICATION PROCESS: **Request application materials and enrollment information from** the Franklin County Educational Council, 52 Starling Street, Columbus, Ohio, 43215. **Telephone: 365-5105.**

DEADLINE: February 21, 1992.

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 15

COST: $40. per student

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Jim Schnell, 251-4581.

CONTACT PERSON: Sharon Jones or Jean Hoffman
Franklin County Educational Council
52 Starling Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
365-5105

Attachment #2

April 2, 1991

TO: Parents of Students Enrolled in
Self Expression Through Public Speaking

FROM: Jim Schnell, Ph.D.

I am sending this letter to briefly outline information relevant to the course your child is enrolled in. The course will meet three Wednesdays (April 10, 17, and 24) from 5:30-9:00 p.m. in Room 232 of Erskine Hall at Ohio Dominican College. We will have a 30 minute dinner break during which students can buy food in our cafeteria or eat food they have brought. This will also give them an opportunity to enjoy the campus atmosphere.

Class will end at 9 p.m. and your children will be waiting for you at the front door of Erskine Hall at that time. Erskine Hall is the largest and most visible building on campus (it has a bell tower on the roof).

Please do not plan on waiting on your child in the classroom. My experience teaching public speaking has taught me having "outsiders" in the classroom can significantly inhibit speakers. This inhibition is especially pronounced when children are observed by adults in an audience comprised of their peers. I emphasize building a climate of trust among participants and the unexpected inclusion of non-participants can be a significant drawback. I appreciate your understanding with this matter.

Parents wanting to wait for children are more than welcome to spend time in Spangler Library or walk around the campus. Ohio Dominican is a friendly campus and visitors are always welcome.

I look forward to working with your children.

Attachment #3

This Certificate is Awarded to

Fred Jones

In Recognition of Sucessful Completition of the Course

Self-Expression Through Public Speaking

Offered Jointly During the Spring of 1991 by

OHIO DOMINICAN COLLEGE

and the

Higher Education Council of Columbus

Dr. William Carroll
Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dr. James Schnell
Professor of Communication